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From strength to strength



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FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.



FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

THREE SERMONS

ON

STAGES IN A CONSECRATED LIFE.

London

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AND NEW YORK.

1890

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH BARBER LIGHTFOOT,
D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.

TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
1857—1862

HULSEAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,
1861—1875

CANON OF ST PAUL'S,
1874—1879

LADY MARGARET'S PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,
1875—1879

BISHOP OF DURHAM,
1879—1889

*O Lord...we...bless Thy holy Name for all Thy servants departed
this life in Thy faith and fear ; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to
follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy
heavenly kingdom.*

Probably it has never before fallen to the lot of any one to endeavour to give expression under the most solemn circumstances to thoughts suggested by three great crises in the life of a friend, for death is for the Christian a crisis in life. As each occasion came I sought to say what the occasion itself told us through him whom we loved, of the office with which he was charged, of the society which he served, of the character by which the servant of GOD is enabled to do his work; and in each region the description of the Christian life and the Christian Faith seemed to find a fresh fulfilment: From strength to strength.

B. F. W.

CAMBRIDGE,

January 10th, 1890.

SERMON I.

From strength to strength.

(Preached in Westminster Abbey at the Consecration of J. B. Lightfoot, D.D., Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, Cambridge, to the See of Durham, on St Mark's Day, 1879.)

SERMON II.

From weakness to strength.

(Preached at the Consecration of the Church of St Ignatius the Martyr, Sunderland, on July 2, 1889.)

SERMON III.

From strength to the rest of GOD.

(Preached in Westminster Abbey on the first Sunday after Christmas, 1889.)

I believe in the Communion of Saints.

ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ὙΜΕῖΣ ΕἷΣ ΕΣΤΕ ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤῶ ἸΗΣΟΥ.

Ye all are one man in Christ Jesus.

GAL. iii. 28.

I.

FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

From strength to strength.

Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
St Mark's Day, 1879.

IT is not necessary to attempt to fix the exact circumstances under which these words were written. The Psalter in its spiritual fulness belongs to no special time; and this Psalm is the hymn of the Divine life in all ages. It brings before us *the grace and the glory* of sacrifice, of service, of progress, where God alone, the Lord of Hosts, is the source and the strength and the end of effort. It is true now, and it is true always, that the voice of faith repeats, as in old time, through loneliness, through labour, through sorrow, its unchanging strain, *from strength to strength*. A Northumbrian saint, it is said, carried up into Heaven in a trance, heard the same thanksgiving rendered by a choir of angels before the Throne of God. It must be so. *The Lord God is a sun* to illuminate *and a shield* to protect. In the pilgrimage of worship that which is personal becomes social. The trust of the believer passes into the trust of the Church. The expectation of one is fulfilled in the joy of all. If the travellers grow weary on their way, it is that they may find unexpected refreshment; if they faint, it is that they may feel the new power which re-quickens them. *They go from strength to*

strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.

This law of movement—of movement which, through the love of God is progress—is realised throughout the Divine life. It is realised in its spring: *from faith to faith* is the charter of Christian confidence. It is realised in its process: *grace for grace* is the blessing on Christian labour. It is realised in its issue: *from glory to glory* is the crown of Christian hope. In a word, the law of life, personal and universal, as God has willed, is summed up in this—*from strength to strength*. It is not true of men, and it is not true of humanity, that their sad journey is ever further from the East. If they move westward, it is with the light, and again towards the light. Without dissembling or extenuating the effects of sin, without forgetting the dark mysteries and open sorrows which hang over generations, centuries, continents, we dare to repeat the sentence—not indeed in exultation, and yet without doubt, as the lesson of the past—*from strength to strength*.

Every nation, every Church, every diocese, can furnish illustrations of the truth. Nowhere, I think, is it shewn more vividly than in that great Northumbrian diocese, unique in its history, in its privileges, in its significance, to which our thoughts are turned to-day. The aspect of Christianity is changed since Gregory, with distant vision, marked out for the future Metropolitan of York twelve Suffragans, whose

number is yet only half completed; since Aidan gained acceptance for the faith among the rude tribes by wise gentleness, and found a king to interpret his message in the strange tongue; since Oswald held fast the forest cross upon the battle-field, the first sign of Christ in the North, and moved his soldiers to win the victory for and through the Lord Whom he had acknowledged; since Bede, in his holy calm, used patiently the gathered treasures of all the learning of Europe—Irish, Gallican, Roman, Greek—and so was enabled to re-kindle the dying flame of culture in the West; since Egelric, last but one of the Saxon Bishops of Durham, wasting away in prison at Westminster, left his grave in the Abbey a place of pilgrimage; since Walcher, the first Bishop after the Conquest, fell a victim to the people whom he sought sternly to coerce by his civil power; since Richard girded Hugh Pudsey with the sword, as Earl of Sadberge, and granted the dignity to his successors for ever; since Antony Beck, unfurling the sacred banner of St Cuthbert, led the van of the army which brought the coronation-stone from Scone to Westminster; since Richard de Bury, the friend of Petrarch, insisted on the study of Greek and Hebrew, and provided for the pursuit of arts along the way of strict and careful scholarship; since Tunstall gave for the use of the students at Cambridge a copy of the first Bible printed in the original tongues, and guarded his people with tender forethought, so that not one

victim fell from among them during the reign of Mary; since Cromwell established a college at Durham "of the foundation of the Lord Protector," believing that "it might produce such happy and glorious fruits as are scarce thought of or foreseen;" since Cosin, who was consecrated to the See, as no one since till to-day, and that, by the side of Brian Walton, within these walls, repaired the ruins of five and twenty years, and earnestly maintained the immunity of his diocese from sending burgesses to Parliament as the sole responsible guardian of the liberties of his people; since Butler, in the sight "of the general decay of religion," pressed his clergy to "instruct people in the importance of external religion," to restore churches, and to multiply services, that so they might bring home to men the practical power of piety, which he rightly felt to be the proper answer to scepticism.

Such scenes, such names—not to come down to later times—bring before us the memories of a chequered life, grievously troubled by passion and self-seeking, yet continuous with a mighty power and unbroken by revolutions. The saint, the scholar, the soldier, the courtier, the statesman, the divine, have added something to the Episcopal inheritance of the See of Aldwin. The sword of Beck, and the thorn-tree of Butler, and the throne of Van Mildert are more than idle relics. In spite of men's weaknesses and vices, in spite of periods of corruption

and sloth, we can say, as we look back over the slow moulding of the northern Palatinate to the new order—*from strength to strength*.

Two features, as it seems to me, give to the Diocese of Durham a peculiar character, the early and lasting combination of spiritual and civil power in the hands of the Bishop, and the singular devotion of the clergy to the study of Holy Scripture. The coronet which in this one case encircles the mitre—the manuscript of St John's Gospel which was found upon the breast of Cuthbert—are eloquent symbols of truths which have a present application. The one expresses in a striking shape the claim of the Faith to deal with the whole sum of life; the other suggests the fertile and yet unchanging rule of doctrine in the written Word. If we cling to the symbols it is not that we wish to recall the forms of the past, but to interpret them. And do we not feel that the truths thus shadowed are those which, above all, we need to have brought home to us in our present trial? We need to see embodied in our society the spirit of counsel and the spirit of prophecy;—the spirit of counsel which shall enter into the questionings and speculations, the problems and the victories of our modern life, as part of the domain of the Church; and the spirit of prophecy which shall interpret to our own age the message of Christ, Incarnate and Ascended, as it is written, once for all, in the Bible.

When we think upon such needs we see that they correspond, in part at least, with the twofold work of our unique Episcopate, on which is laid the burden of statesmanship and the burden of spiritual guidance. In such a body no skill in administration, no power of personal influence, no warmth of religious feeling can supply the place of large knowledge and deep insight. The strength of Catholic learning and the courage of large-hearted policy must find a place in the College of our spiritual fathers if we are to be saved from the waste and exhaustion of isolated and discordant labours. A great society cannot exist without great ideas; and great ideas perish unless they find worthy utterance. To organise is not to rule: merely to repeat a formula is not to instruct. The ruler must grasp the just proportion of the objects and duties of government; he must measure the wants and capacities of all his subjects; he must develop vital powers and not simply marshal them; he must never lose sight of his ideal while he does the little which is within his reach. The teacher again must be ready to bring out of his treasure things new as well as old; he must never be weary of translating into the current idiom the thoughts which his ancestors have mastered, and never backward to welcome the fresh voices of later wisdom.

It is a natural consequence of our restless and busy life that we are turned by multitudinous details

from the steady contemplation of the broad aspects of things. It is easier to crowd the day with little duties than to spend it in the silent study of enigmas which yield no immediate answer. But the issue is already seen to be disastrous. We hear it said that "a large part of the business of the wise is to counteract the efforts of the good." And meanwhile the growing complexity of life brings widespread hesitancy and doubt and moral relaxation. We feel ourselves, if it be but for rare moments, that there are whole regions of life on which we have not looked; and we tremble at the phantoms with which we unconsciously people them.

In such a state of things we cannot but turn to those whose position requires them to regard the greatest problems of the time under the responsibility of action, who must contemplate things not as students only, but as statesmen, for that spirit of counsel which we need. Nor do I fear that I shall be misunderstood if I say that our ancient Universities supply with singular fulness the discipline which may train the spiritual counsellor. Nowhere else, I believe, is a generous sympathy with every form of thought and study more natural or more effective; nowhere else is it equally easy to gauge the rising tide of opinion and feeling which will prevail after us; nowhere else is there in equal measure that loyal enthusiasm which brings the highest triumphs of faith within the reach of labour. He who has

striven there towards the ideal of student and teacher will have gained powers fitted for a larger use. He who has lived in communion with the greatest minds of all ages will not be hasty to make his own thoughts the measure of truth. He who has watched the specious transformation of assertion into fact will not withdraw anything from rigorous inquiry. Not one acquisition of toilsome research will be unfruitful in lessons of patient endurance. Not one rule of exact criticism will be unserviceable in fixing the limits of possible knowledge. The character of a scholar has in its direct force infinitely greater power than any product of his skill. Literary work, however perfect, reflects in some degree the passing temper of the age; but character enters into the very depths of life, quickening, moulding, inspiring: the one is a fair building, the other is a tree *whose seed is in itself*. The mode of ministry may change, but in the service of sacrifice every endowment, no less than every worshipper, *shall appear before God in Zion: they, too, will go from strength to strength.*

The memories of the old princely rights of the See of Durham move us to recognise once more this aspect of the Episcopate as the organ of spiritual counsel. They witness now to the charge which is laid upon the heads of the Christian society to regard all social questions as proper subjects of their thought. They are, when rightly interpreted, an answer to the pitiless verdict that "the entire theory of the Church

is antagonistic to any concentrated or consistent scheme for raising the earthly condition of the masses." Our present distresses emphasise the urgency of the call. Nor do I think that there will be any rest for nations till the leaders of Christendom bring home to the world the truths which they hold. Nothing but our Faith can deal finally with the problems of democracy. Eleven centuries have not modified the power of its message. Without it life is but a gleam of light between two depths of chilling gloom—out of the darkness into the darkness—according to the image of the Northern chief. And, on the other hand, I know no problem of society which the Gospel is not able to illuminate. It proclaims the true basis of fellowship in the Incarnation; it ennobles and concentrates the many offices which are united in one body; it reveals the abiding supremacy of character, which is independent of the accidental circumstances of life. Nor may we stop here; for I will not shrink from adding that the English Church seems to me to be marked out by its history, by its inheritance, by its constitution, reaching through all classes, in contact with all religions, in sympathy with all truth, able in St Paul's sense to become *all things to all men*, as destined by God to give expression to the social Gospel for which we are waiting.

Such a Gospel lies in Christianity; such an office appears to be committed to our Church; and as yet

we have not acknowledged it. Can we then wonder that we are met by sad doubts and suspicions, that we are charged with insincerity, that we are inwardly disheartened by the sense of a mission unrecognised? To gain quietness and confidence we must look for the manifestation of a power of life which shall vindicate for Christ every interest and every faculty of man. To provide for this, to call it out, to cherish it, is above all things an Episcopal work. Here lies for our age that care for the weak which is characteristically committed to our Bishops. The imposition of hands by which they appoint ministers and people alike to a priestly office in different spheres requires to receive its full interpretation. They who bless all for life's work in the name of God must claim for God as a harmonious service every energy of personal and social power. A Bishop is not the father of the clergy only, but of the Church—the head not of an order only, but of a people.

And let us not doubt that when our Bishops have measured the problems of the age by the spirit of counsel, they will receive the spirit of prophecy in answer to the prayer of faith. This spirit comes through the old channels. Therefore it is that the Bible is delivered again into the Bishop's hands, but with a new charge. It is not enough that he should "preach the Word of God." He must "think upon the things contained in that book" with resolute

meditation. He must be "diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men." On him rests the responsibility of mastering the latest meaning of the written Word, and commending it practically to the world. For the Scriptures, like the human character of Christ, are of no age and of no country. Their last utterance will not be spoken while the world lasts. To each generation it is given to see something more of their wealth. Already, I will venture to say, the facts which have been established in our time as to the relations of man to man and of man to nature have filled with a new meaning mysterious passages of St Paul, and revealed fresh depths in the historic message of the Gospel. It is hard indeed to realise that in these ways God is speaking to us. For many, as of old, the Divine voice is but a thunder-peal. We want then the disciplined guidance of the prophet; but we can feel that the whole significance of life will be changed when we have learnt to listen for tidings of the will of our God and Saviour from every investigator of His works; when the enthusiasm of discovery is no longer met by the cry "No further," but hallowed by the petition, *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth*. To refuse to welcome any truths, however fragmentary they may be, to dissemble them, to force them to the model of our prepossessions, is to dishonour the Spirit which is sent in Christ's Name. Little by little He is unfold-

ing now that Name on which all being is a commentary. Theology, Christian Theology, cannot be stationary. Every fact which is added to our knowledge of man or of the world illuminates our knowledge of God. Here, also, the Psalmist's words are true—*from strength to strength*.

We look then—we must look—to our Episcopate for the expression of the spirit of counsel and of the spirit of prophecy. It may perhaps seem chimerical to seek from those who are overburdened by routine duties the fulfilment of these loftiest functions, which can only be fulfilled in spaces of calm thought. I know that the type of Episcopal work which I have endeavoured to indicate has grown somewhat strange to us under the pressure of our recent revivals. I know that it will be difficult to realise it under the conditions of present custom. But every circumstance of our gathering to-day points to such an effort as the aim of our prayers. The traditions of Durham, the studies and the teachings of Cambridge, the popular activities of St Paul's, the subtle debates at Westminster, all enforce the same charge. Let not one fragment then be lost. With one heart we ask this morning for him "who is called to the office and ministry of a Bishop," echoing, as we trust, the words which Christ Himself speaks through the facts of life, that over every old gift may be written, in the new office "*from strength to strength*."

Something, no doubt, must be sacrificed if the

end is to be gained. We know, or rather we do not know, what we have sacrificed at Cambridge. But if the end appears to be attainable, every needful sacrifice will be cheerfully made. Men are growing weary, I think, of the restless activity which makes reflection impossible where it is most necessary. Let it but be seen that the whole life is given to the office, and they will be content to postpone their own wants. In the highest places there must be a choice of work. Much must be left undone that that which is most needful may be done. To determine what is most needful is the supreme responsibility of leadership; and he will best fulfil the office of spiritual government who has courage to regard the proportion between the manifold demands which are made upon his care; who has patience to labour in silence for the distant harvest which he will not reap; who has sympathy to win and to use that devotion of others by which great leaders are strong; who can follow the movements of science, of philanthropy, of legislation, from the vantage-ground of Faith; who can recognise the Divine call which bids him offer no conventional service but that which the past has given him in practical experience and intellectual wealth.

Nor may we forget that in Durham a University is ready to minister to the Diocese, and that it finds a home for the Bishop within its walls. Such a position is, I believe, unparalleled. At length the anti-

cipations of Cromwell appear to await an unexpected accomplishment. The Festival of St Mark offers the memories of the school of Alexandria. But, however the opportunity may be used, we cannot mistake its significance. A life spent in dealing with the young may bias my own judgment; but I feel that there are untold victories for Christ within the reach of him to whom it may be given to keep alive and strengthen the simple devotion and the high desires of early manhood when entering on the active business of life. There is often a rude contrast between our first ideals and our first practical efforts. In the shock many let Faith slip, many try to support it by artificial stays. On all sides we banish to some distant time the immediate action of God. We treasure as dead relics the forces which we should recognise as living powers. Because the fashion of the world changes we think that Heaven is farther off now than in the childhood of the Church. But let our Fathers in God make it clear that every righteous activity is a Divine service, that every aspiration after truth is, consciously or unconsciously, a looking to Christ, that every Article of the Creed is a motive and a help to holiness; let them proclaim again the words of Apostles and Evangelists without disparaging the partial formulas in which men of old time have translated them, and without accepting any one formula as final and exhaustive; let them offer as the scene of human labour a world not left fatherless, echoing with spiritual

voices, and bound together through all its parts with underlying harmonies of love; let them keep steadily before the eyes of men *the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, which bring into their true place deep and doubtful questionings, framed of necessity in imperfect language; let them gather round them, as Bede bade Egbert, such a companionship as may shew by a simple life the power of that Presence on which they look; let them hold forth in all its splendour to eager souls the ideal of that Kingdom in which each earthly achievement finds its consummation and each earthly effort its hallowing; and I can well believe that a revolution will be effected, even in a single generation, more beneficent than that of the Fourth Century in social influence; more disciplined than that of the Thirteenth in personal self-sacrifice; more comprehensive than that of the Sixteenth in the co-ordination of truth.

As the vision rises before us, as we feel that it answers to the inherent power of our Faith, as we confess that it lingers far off, dim and fleeting, through our great fault, we cry again, bowed down by past failures, disheartened by our present divisions, paralysed by the measures of our hopes, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

There can be but one answer—he who wholly forgets himself in God Who called him; he who “lays down at the footstool of God his successes and his failures, his hopes and his fears, his knowledge

and his ignorance, his weakness and his strength, his misgivings and his confidences—all that he is and all that he might be—content to take up thence just that which God shall give him¹.” That is our trust now. To give up the tranquil home of thirty years, to suspend abruptly the fulfilment of a chosen life-work, to face the necessity of realising under untried conditions a new ideal, shall be, by God’s grace, for him who hears only the voice of God bidding him enter on a pilgrimage of Faith, to go *from strength to strength*.

So it is that words spoken as on this day two years ago come back to the speaker and to us, sealed by manifold blessings. The prayers which were then answered add confidence to our new petitions. We believe in the Divine commission, *As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*. We believe in the Divine assurance, *Lo! I am with you all the days to the end of the world*. We believe in the Divine victory, *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me*. And our faith is turned into supplication. Let us forget all but that charge, that Presence, that Redemption. There must be in the outward life checks, lonelinesses, defects. We cannot always keep at the level of our loftiest thoughts. But for the soul which offers itself to God, which accepts—because it is His will—the burden of command, which claims—

¹ Dr Lightfoot’s Sermon at the Consecration of the Bishop of Truro, St Mark’s Day, 1877.

because it is His promise—the spirit of counsel and the spirit of prophecy, the words shall be fulfilled, through the discipline of disappointment and the joy of sacrifice, *from strength to strength*.

O Lord God of Hosts, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee.

When the Bishop was asked to add a short motto from the Greek Testament to his signature in an album of portraits of the Revisers of the Authorised Version, he wrote

ἀνδρίζεσθε κραταίωσθε.

(Quit you like men, be strong.)

I COR. xvi. 13.

II.

FROM WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH.

...from weakness were made strong.

HEBR. xi. 34.

ST IGNATIUS, SUNDERLAND,

July 2, 1889.

(The Visitation of the Virgin Mary.)

From weakness were made strong.—These words are, as we all remember, part of that divine summary of the Old Testament, in which the record of the past victories of faith is offered to Hebrew Christians for consolation and encouragement in a season of trial and danger. The Apostle has spoken of faith triumphant over the manifold assaults of physical violence: he goes on to speak of faith as the spring of strength. Through faith the heroes of old time *were made strong from weakness, proved mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens*. The gift of strength, the exercise of strength, the triumph of strength, had all one origin.

From weakness were made strong.—The thought corresponds with the festival which the Western Church, in the 14th century, fixed to-day, the festival of the Visitation, the festival of the *Magnificat*. The thought corresponds with our own festival, when we rejoice to acknowledge that the thank-offering for the blessing of work accomplished, has become also the thank-offering for the blessing of vigour restored for work yet to come. And the thought has a yet fuller and wider application. It expresses a law which is fulfilled in the history of Christendom, of churches, of men.

From weakness were made strong.—Yes, there is a weakness which is the very condition of strength: an overwhelming sense of the perils to be faced, of the labours to be accomplished, of the problems to be solved, great beyond all comparison with the natural forces which we can bring to our task: a weakness which answers to the conscious need of immeasurable power: a weakness which constrains us to rest on the unseen, and to realise that in our isolation we are not alone. The Church of God was founded by that weakness which recognises and rests in the Infinite, when a solitary pilgrim left all to follow the divine voice, calling him he knew not whither, and Abraham, from a homeless wanderer, became the Father of the Faithful. The charge of Moses was achieved when he laid aside the glory of a royal house and identified himself with a multitude of murmuring and dull-hearted bondmen. The mission of Israel to the world was discharged, not when the authority of the kingdom was extended most widely, but when scattered bands of exiles, turning to Zion with unwavering love, taught the nations something of their spiritual hope.

The history of Christendom illustrates the same truth. When we look back over eighteen centuries, we see how times of material prosperity, of wealth, of splendour, of supremacy, have always been times of exceptional danger. Then Christ has come, and in unexpected ways He has made His power known to

those who lost themselves in Him. When His faith had conquered the empire, it seemed that the Church would embody the spirit of the world, or abandon its largest claims. In different ways Athanasius and Augustine—the one deserted and exiled, the other beleaguered by his enemies at his death—vindicated its independence and affirmed its universality. For three centuries Europe was desolated by fierce tribes, and then missionaries from our own islands won them to the gospel. When the Northumbrian Oswald, taught by Aidan, fell with a prayer for the souls of men upon his lips, we feel that the victory was won. The victory was won, and with its final completeness came the temptation of power. In the triumph of the Papacy the poor were forgotten; but Francis of Assisi saw Christ in the leper, and again, through those who claimed to be less than the least, the message of the gospel reached the humblest and the greatest. The years went on. Fresh forces of life were called into activity. Fresh treasures of ancient thought were opened for common use. The bonds of the old order were rudely broken. But, even then, in the day of division and failure and reproach Christ came, and, through the undisciplined expression of individual faith, He revealed more fully than before His power to hallow every variety of thought and use every variety of service.

So it has been in the past. In each successive crisis, when material forces have threatened to over-

whelm the faith—when material splendour has filled the hearts of men, or physical inquiries have engrossed their thoughts—Christ has shewn Himself in some commanding manifestation of spiritual power. The force of Imperialism yielded to the constancy of Christian doctors. The force of barbarism yielded to the voice of Christian missionaries. The teaching of the friars provided that the poor should not be disregarded in the day of mediæval feudalism. The charms of art and literature were ineffective to silence the simple cry of the awakened conscience at the Renaissance. From age to age, in the stern times of decision, those who saw God and trusted Him *from weakness were made strong*.

So it has been in the past. And now once more, if we trust the cycles of human life, we may look for another revelation of the Lord, which shall answer to our own conditions and our own needs. "The world"—the superficial world—the world of the multitudinous marvels of things which can be handled and measured—"is too much with us." But Christ is with us too, even if as yet we see Him not. How He will make Himself seen we cannot tell; but at least we know something of the facts which His presence will illuminate, something of the thoughts which He will carry to fulfilment, something of the nobler affections which He will bless. We live in an epoch of contradictions. Never has the passion for fellowship between class and class been so strong as now,

when the circumstances of labour seem to force men into pitiless competition ; never has the necessity of peace been so keenly recognised as now, when all Europe is a fortress or a camp, and the people seem to snatch a precarious rest "between the conflict of yesterday and the conflict of to-morrow." Never has the sense of a mysterious unity between all things seen and unseen been so penetrating and so widespread as now, when specialism seems to be the condition of knowledge. Never have the inscrutable potencies of life been regarded with such boundless expectation as now, when men turn aside from the one divine event, which gives reality to their inspirations and substance to their hope, as being irreconcilable with experience.

We look then with eager and undoubting gaze for a coming of Christ to this generation, which shall enable us, through a truer understanding of the Incarnation, to fuse these conflicting and fragmentary feelings into the fulness of a nobler life. Nothing less can satisfy our faith, and nothing but our faith can secure the result. Christianity alone of all religions, as founded upon that supreme Fact, that eternal Truth, the Word become flesh, inspires faith in man as man, made in the image of God. Christianity alone offers one ideal for all ; an ideal which history has proved to find embodiment under every variety of man's condition. Christianity alone claims for its domain all that is truly human as being truly

divine, and welcomes every gain of industry and intellect, while it places upon each treasure the hallowing mark of the cross, and the ennobling mark of infinity, to shew the present destination of service, and its illimitable value in the age to come.

It is well then, brethren, that with such a prospect before us, we should, conscious of our immeasurable wants, think of our calling and of God's gifts, that *from weakness* we may be *made strong*. I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of our place in the development of life.

"What times are little? To the sentinel
The hour is regal when he mounts on guard."

I do not wish to imply that the final success of the cause of Christ depends on our endeavour. With us or without us that will prevail; but oh! the unspeakable difference for us. And I do say that God has given to us a unique task, a unique opportunity. I do pray that in the day of our visitation we may welcome our Lord and our Redeemer, however strangely He may seem to be disguised, till at last, in the act of some simple communion, He is made known to us in His glory.

He has given us, I repeat, a unique task, a unique opportunity—a unique task in that He has charged us by every characteristic of our history to realise, in the completeness of a vital harmony, the unity of national life: a unique opportunity in that He has preserved to us a national Church, as the spiritual

organ of the whole body. Storms of controversy may obscure the significance of the facts. Times of indolence and pride may discredit them. But I have no fear that the student, who with calm and patient eyes regards the phenomena of human progress, will underrate their present and their potential value. The one truth which I have watched through my life rising into power, almost into supremacy, is the reality of our social existence. We have learnt that the nation and the race, no less than the family, have a substantive being; that the nation is not an organisation devised by fear or convenience, but a union, a development, lying in the divine ideal of man; and we are learning that it is the will of God that nations should realise their brotherhood, and that the end of humanity will be reached by their generous co-operation in bringing their several treasures—*their honour and glory*—into His Kingdom. Under this aspect, then, I venture to say that England is complete by the divine Providence, in a sense in which no other great nation is complete. It has in the national Church an organ for the expression of its spiritual life which has grown with its growth. For the Church of England is no accidental or adventitious appendage to the civil power, no voluntary association of man's devising, but a part of the living body of the state, which, without abating the least fragment of its claim to be the depository and guardian of revealed truth, the ordinary channel of the gifts and the teachings of

the Holy Spirit, without diminishing aught from its inheritance of apostolic order and catholic doctrine, has fulfilled its office under the conditions of our English character, bringing to us the lessons which we are best fitted to master, offering to us the works which we are best fitted to achieve, uniting age to age and generation to generation with one unbroken and ever-deepening stream of spiritual life.

In saying this I make no claim of external precedence for the Church in which I am allowed to serve Christ; nay rather I acknowledge a crushing burden, which God alone can help those to bear to whom He has given it. I lament, as sadly as any one, grievous mistakes, failures, misunderstandings in the past—divisions, bitternesses, arrogance, self-will, in the present; but these cannot alter our special prerogative of inherited duty. I acknowledge most gladly what other Christian Societies have done for our common Master, within the sphere of our charge; but such societies cannot lighten or share our peculiar responsibility. They are, as it were, great religious orders. They would repudiate what we have received from our fathers, the pastorate of the English people.

What then, you ask, is this pastorate? It is to bring to every citizen, without weariness and without hesitation, the message of the Gospel—to offer to all in Christ's name, the gifts of spiritual power—to claim from all the tribute of loyal service to His

cause. It is to provide that every cry for spiritual help shall be answered; that every resource of counsel and consolation shall be, as of right, at the command of the least and the most desolate. It is to strive that every great subject shall be brought into the light of our Christian Creed—that questions of national and international policy shall be debated in the sight of God—that some shall dare to plead for a pause of calm thought when gusts of passion or arrogance are sweeping the people towards an unrighteous judgment. It is to offer a meeting place where every one can come in true equality of soul, offering the best which he has for the common service, and receiving of the wealth of a life which belongs to all.

The circumstances of our time require the accomplishment of such a work. The growth of popular power involves the growth of popular responsibility. The acknowledgment of the spiritual is the only pledge, the only consecration of freedom. Great leaders of democracy, who do not confess our faith, have told us lately that now every question is in the end a religious question, which admits only of a religious answer. Here, as elsewhere, a human instinct has divined the judgment of the faith. As Christians we hold that the faith does cover every fragment of life. As Christians we hold that the greatest thoughts are for every believer. As Christians we have no esoteric teaching for a cultured class. The soul which God made can recognise its Maker.

Trusting to that kinsmanship our Church claims the nation for the object of its ministry.

But some will say that our National Church has not fulfilled the office which I have indicated. I do not care to deny the charge. To acknowledge failure is to keep open the way to success. I do not fear to confess weakness: such confession is a prayer that it may be said of us hereafter, as it has been said of those who, in earlier times, pursued a great ideal in trust on God, *from weakness they were made strong*. But, even now, I ask whether our Church has not, in fact, recognised the problems of modern society with surprising rapidity, and essayed to deal with them with self-denying and courageous zeal. I ask what you have yourselves seen during the episcopate of ten years, of which this house of God is an eloquent memorial? Do you not feel that during that time you have gained spiritual force, not only from the unwearied personal devotion of your bishop, but, because he has administered for your blessing the accumulated heritage of an unbroken life of more than twelve centuries? Do you not feel that the past has come nearer to you with a message of reassurance, and that the future appears less menacing, because you have seen in him that large sympathy which is born of noble traditions and great duties? Do you not feel that his influence has extended far beyond the limits of our own communion, because he has recognised the breadth of his obligations and moved among you

as the representative of the whole diocese? Do you not feel that the forty-five houses of God, which have risen in answer to his appeal, the seventy "sons of his house," whom he has sent to minister to you, witness to a force gathered from old times, quickened but not created? Do you not feel that that unity, for which we all are longing, has been brought a little closer to us, when all Durham looks to him as the natural leader in every movement for education, for temperance, for social purity? I have a right to use a personal argument. He who wisely uses the resources of an institution is the interpreter, and, in some sense, the measure of its power. The great man is the sign of the great society.

And for us to-day the largest thoughts must take a personal shape. I have just spoken of this building, most religious in its solemn dignity, as a memorial of an episcopate rich in abiding fruits, a memorial of sacrifices offered and blessed, of prayers made and answered. And it is in a true sense a living memorial. For there is, indeed (would that we did not forget it), between a gift and a bequest the whole difference of life. The benefactor lives in his gift. He himself works through it, and he enjoys the fruits of its working. This Church of Ignatius places its giver's long-chosen literary labours, which he postponed to his appointed charge, in connexion with your services to Christ, in which he will find his great reward. It offers to you, by its unique dedication,

the inspiring example of a new Saint. It has received no material relics, but its very stones are the witness of self-surrender. It holds no letters written in the dust (as in the ancient ritual) by the bishop's staff, but letters written by his love on the heart of him who will minister in it. It teaches you to look beyond England in order that you may feel your debt and your duty. It reminds you of the widespread glory of your spiritual ancestry, in which you reckon side by side an apostle of the far East and an apostle of the far West—Ignatius of Antioch and Columba of Hy. It discloses, if you study its memories, the secret of spiritual transfiguration, *from weakness were made strong*. It leads you to lessons which bring the transfiguration home to all.

From weakness were made strong. Ignatius the Martyr realised the fact. A late convert—an untimely birth—as he called himself, perhaps a former persecutor, he would have been a name only if he had not been called to die for Christ. The call revealed the Saint. His work was martyrdom; and on his triumphant progress to death he wrote the seven brief letters which have given a type and inspiration to later sufferers. As his passion drew nearer, Christ drew nearer too, very and perfect man. "He had," in the words which he is said to have addressed to Trajan, "Christ in his breast." And there is a deep truth in the late legend which tells how, "when his heart was cut in pieces, the name of the Lord Jesus

“Christ was found written in letters of gold upon every “piece.” That was his secret which he proclaims to us. That was the spring of his passionate enthusiasm. That was the stay of his power. He had Christ in his breast: he was, according to his surname, “a God-bearer” (θεοφόρος). Therefore he has a living voice when he says to us to-day across the ages: The Gospel “is not a thing of persuasive rhetoric, but of “might.” Its “charter is Christ’s Cross, and Death, “and Resurrection, and the faith that is through Him.” “The faithless are tombstones on which men’s names “only are written.” “We lack many things, that God “may not be lacking.” “God promiseth union, and “this union is Himself.” “Let there be one prayer “in common, one supplication, one mind, one hope, “in love and in joy unblameable, which is Jesus “Christ.” “Pray without ceasing for the rest of “mankind, for there is in them a hope of repentance.” “If the prayer of one and another hath so great force, “how much more that of the Bishop and of the whole “Church.”

Such counsels, brethren, sink deep in our souls when we confess this morning that God has given to us the firstfruits of their accomplishment. *From weakness were made strong.* The words have here yet another, a more personal, a more touching application. This Church was planned in grateful acknowledgment of work fulfilled through years of unwonted strength, has been consecrated in overflowing thank-

fulness for strength renewed past hope, as it seemed, for the work of years to come. That weakness done away has made God (may I not say so?) more clearly visible. The future will be felt to be His gift even more than the past.

Ten years ago it was my privilege to commend your Bishop to your prayers when he was set apart for his office at Westminster. I spoke then of his life as I had known it for 30 years. I summed up all in the phrase of the pilgrim-psalm—“*from strength to strength.*” I sought to follow a progress of unbroken vigour into another sphere. I sketched boldly what might be expected from him in the field of Christian statesmanship and Christian teaching. You know how he has ruled the Diocese with the spirit of counsel and the spirit of prophecy, how he has bound hearts together by a pattern of work for love’s sake, how he has made way for calm and patient thought, how he has used the opportunities of a great place to shew that our English Church is, as I then said, “destined by God to give expression to the social Gospel for which we are waiting.” There has been the advance “*from strength to strength*” for which I dared to look; and now God has shewn us, after a season of anxious suspense, a nobler way “*from weakness to strength.*”

He has shewn us the way with every sign of gracious power; and this way is open to the least as to the greatest. All that is required of the heaven-

ward traveller who follows it, is perfect self-surrender and perfect trust. Yielding himself to the Spirit of God, the simplest believer will live with the power of a divine life. He will aim, not at some crown of privilege, but at shewing the capacities of the common lot. He will commend by his practice the example of untiring effort, and not of contented self-indulgence. He will keep the vision of his ideal tranquil and pure, even when his efforts to reach it end in confusion and failure. He will find the spring of his joy in the certainty that the cause for which he labours will conquer, and not in the particular success which he may be enabled to achieve,—in the work itself, and not in his part in it. He will welcome as the criterion of faithful toil, not wealth or honour, but help given to sad and weary souls. He will think nothing lost, because he offers all to God, Who will guard what He receives. He will think nothing impossible, because God, in His good time, will fulfil the thought which He inspires.

So we come back to the apostolic message from which we began. The gift of strength is followed by the exercise of the gift, and crowned by its triumph. The complete message is for all. May we then all, without any nice calculation of our powers, make our own this lesson of the *Magnificat*, this lesson of Ignatius, this lesson of our own glad experience, strength from weakness, that God may use us, in the full measure of our ability, to accomplish the work of our

English Church for our nation, for Christendom, for the world, "unto His greater glory."

Ad majorem Dei gloriam. The motto of the Spanish Ignatius comes to us with a purer light, unchequered by one cloud of human ambition, one stain of human faithlessness, from Ignatius of Antioch. We welcome it as the sign of all which will be done here in the days to come—*strength from weakness unto the greater glory of God.*

III.

FROM STRENGTH TO THE REST OF GOD.

*They go from strength to strength; every one of them
appeareth before God in Zion.*

Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,

Sunday after Christmas, 1889.

WE have all pondered at some quiet time this Psalm of human pilgrimage and divine fellowship, of human aspiration and divine fulfilment (Ps. lxxxiv.): this Psalm in which the solitary exile confesses that his soul can find satisfaction only in worship, his feeling and his sense only in the recognition of a living God: this Psalm in which he acknowledges with a tenderness taught by sorrow that his King and his God offers the shelter of His altar to the humblest creature which He has made.

We have all felt in the course of the chequered years something of the bitterness of unsatisfied desires, something of the desolateness of the way by which we must travel, something of the fruitlessness of the labours on which we have spent our force.

And there are those in every age to whom God in His great love makes known the transforming power of His Presence: who look to Him and find in every longing the sign of a new joy, in every lonely place a gate of heaven, thronged with messengers of mercy, in every disappointment that appointed season of darkness which is the prelude to the harvest (John xii. 24). *They go from strength to strength: every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.* For such, the

vision of God is the source of energy and the goal of effort. *The life of man* is indeed, in the phrase of an early Father, *the vision of God—vita hominis visio Dei*—and yet this is not the fulness of the truth. The life of man is that he stands before God and bears the light of that ineffable glory. It is not that he sees God, with faculties feeble and intermittent, but that he appears before God, that he feels, in other words, that God sees him, sustaining and purifying all on which His eye rests with a compassion which is unchangeable. Thus the exact phrase fixes our confidence on that which cannot fail. Our vision of God clouded and incomplete, is made possible by God's vision of us, which is perfect and uninterrupted. Not so much knowing Him as known of Him, not so much seeing as seen, we have the assurance that our loftiest thoughts answer to His inspiration, and our largest hopes to His counsel.

We have all, I say, often pondered these things. We have often called up before our minds the image of a life moving through every variety of circumstance, through achievements and delays, through discipline and sorrow, with one unbroken tenor of fruitful service, and then shewn at last as being what it ever has been, a life fulfilled in the face of God.

So the words of the Psalmist will always have many applications fertile in lessons of hope and encouragement. Here and today they are to me the record of a life which has been a great part of my

own life, the simple experience of a friendship of forty years, a friendship which, at this most solemn time, does not seem so much to have been interrupted as to have been consecrated for evermore.

They go from strength to strength: every one of them appeareth before God in Zion. Ten years ago, when it was my duty to commend the Bishop of Durham to the prayers of this Congregation in view of the charge which was then entrusted to him, I used the first clause to express what I knew and what I hoped, what I knew of his work as a scholar, what I hoped for his work as a bishop; and at his enthronement he himself chose as the inspiring watchword for his future labours the assurance which completes the joy of God's servants, *they shall see His face* (Rev. xxii. 4). Now, as we humbly trust, "life's pilgrimage ended," to borrow his own words, "he appears in the eternal Zion, the celestial city, *where is neither sun nor moon, for the glory of God doth lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof*"¹; and I venture to use the whole verse as the fitting summary of a life completed *in the Lord*—completed according to one law, *from strength to strength*, from the strength of faith and conflict to the strength of sight and fruition.

"A life completed *in the Lord*." Yes: with the deepest sense of personal bereavement, I must hold that the life on which we look is a true whole. I

¹ *Guardian*, May 21, 1879.

cannot speak of it as incomplete. It is true that we confidently looked for fresh treasures of scholarship to be brought out of his accumulated stores: for more proofs of that just and vigorous administration by which, as one said to me who could speak with authority, he had made his diocese of one heart: for more counsels of calm and sober judgment in seasons of perplexity: but all these would only have been further illustrations of the nature which we knew already. The type was fixed, and recognised, and welcomed; and a noble character is more than noble works. It is an inexhaustible source of life like itself. Productiveness is measured by power of quickening. And never have I felt before as I feel now the vitality of all true work: the certainty that all true work is in one sense complete.

What then, you will ask me, is the secret of the life of him to whom we look this afternoon with reverent regard? It is, in a word, the secret of strength. He was strong by singleness of aim, by resolution, by judgment, by enthusiasm, by sympathy, by devotion. In old days it was strength to be with him: and for the future it will be strength to remember him.

1. He was strong by singleness of aim. No thought of self ever mingled with his most laborious or his most brilliant efforts. He neither sought nor avoided praise or emolument or honour. He was sent by his Master's commission *to bear witness to the Truth*.

If the Truth was imperilled he put forth all his powers to guard it. If it was established, his end was reached. In that spirit, as I know better than any, he could claim for others that which was his own by right, and rejoice if they obtained successes which he could easily have made his own. In all things he gladly submitted himself to what he called "the exacting "tyranny of an unselfish love." If he rejoiced, as he did rejoice, in Auckland and Durham, it was that he might be vividly reminded of the responsibilities which were attached to his inheritance, and feel through their salutary discipline "the blessing of "great cares" crowned by unsparing munificence. He gratefully acknowledged his debt to the past, and he wished to write the acknowledgement on his own gifts. He attached to the Scholarship which he founded at Durham the name of the greatest scholar among his predecessors, Richard de Bury. The banded quatrefoil piers in S. Ignatius' at Sunderland—his thank offering for the work of ten years—were made at his request after the pattern of those at Auckland that they might mark for ever the origin of the daughter church.

2. He was strong by resolution. His care and calmness in forming a decision were matched by his inflexibility when it was once formed. "You cannot "tell," he said to me as we walked together in the gardens of Trinity on the last evening of his University life, "what it costs me to break up the home of

"thirty years, and abandon what I thought would be "the work of my life-time." I did indeed know something of the agony of that week in which he was seeking to learn his duty. I could not altogether miss the meaning of the tone in which he said at last with trembling lips, "I have decided: I go to Durham." But when the choice was once made, from that time forward Cambridge was nobly forgotten. There was not one look backward: not one word of regret. I can well believe that the years which followed were "the happiest of his life," for they followed on an act of complete self-sacrifice.

3. He was strong by that sobriety of judgment which commands the old, and that fire of enthusiasm which wins the young. His interest centred in the fulness of human life. Speculation had comparatively little attraction for him. Even this limitation of his intellectual character increased his influence and effectiveness in dealing with concrete facts. He shrank from indistinctness and indecision. Nothing "visionary," nothing that men call "mystical," marred the effect of his masculine reasoning. He knew equally well how to be silent and how to plead his cause with keen and persistent eagerness. As long as he was free, he spoke not because he had an opportunity for speaking, or because he was expected to speak, but because he had a message to deliver; and then he pressed his conviction with an eloquence which has hardly yet been duly recog-

nised. In argument and in exposition he preserved a true sense of proportion. His learning was always an instrument and not an end. No investigation of detail ever diverted his attention from the main issue. He mastered two outlying languages, Armenian and Coptic, in order to deal more surely with the secondary materials of the Ignatian controversy, but no ordinary reader would know the fact. For him the interpretation of ancient texts was a study in life. He held books to be a witness of something far greater, through which alone they could be understood. A Greek play, or a fragmentary inscription, or a letter of Basil, or a Homily of Chrysostom, was to him a revelation of men stirred by like passions with ourselves, intelligible only through a vital apprehension of the circumstances under which they were written. He was a born historian. "How I "long," he said to me more than once, "to write a "history of the Fourth Century." If he has not written it, he has shewn how it must be written. So it was that he found the Holy Scriptures to be, as he was never weary of proclaiming, *living oracles*, the utterances of the Spirit through living men, articulate with a human voice as long as souls strive and faint and exult in God. So it was that he delighted to note the contrasts in St Paul's words and acts, that he might realise and convey to others the conception of a teacher striving, even as we may strive in our measure, to overcome ignorance and prejudice by the

versatile power of an unlimited love. So it was that in his Commentaries he sought to lead students beyond thoughts and rules. "If," he said, "we would learn what [St Paul] held to be [the] essence [of the Gospel], we must ask ourselves what is the significance of such phrases as 'I desire you in the heart of Jesus Christ,' 'To me to live is Christ,' 'That I may know the power of Christ's resurrection,' 'I have all strength in Christ that giveth me power.' Though the Gospel is capable of doctrinal exposition, though it is eminently fertile in moral results, yet its substance is neither a dogmatic system nor an ethical code, but a Person, and a Life¹."

4. He was strong by breadth of sympathy. Sympathy is indeed the necessary offspring of the historical spirit. No one can study the Bible, no one can study the New Testament, with open eyes, and fail to see how the one Truth receives homage now in this form, now in that; how it transcends the contents of every human system; how the fact of the Incarnation requires for its complete expression the ministry of all ages and of all men; how it gives to all believers an inspiration of unity and teaches that uniformity is impossible.

Twice, on representative occasions, as some among us may remember, he enforced the principle of Christian sympathy with characteristic vigour, and laid down

¹ Preface to the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*.

firmly its essential limitations. Once¹, when speaking to undergraduates at Cambridge on "the enormous "power which lay latent in the heart of each, even "the weakest," he gave them for their motto *All things are yours and ye are Christ's*; and charged them with burning words "as the heirs of eighteen Christian "centuries" to use every gift as servants of one sovereign Lord. Ignatius the martyr, he said, is yours, and Athanasius and Francis of Assisi, and Luther and Xavier, and Wesley, because "after all they are "only broken lights of Him who is the full and perfect 'light," because you and they are Christ's. The immemorial annals of life are yours, he added, if I may paraphrase his words, and yours too all the results of physical analysis and construction, because you and these are Christ's, Whom God appointed Heir of all things, even as He made all things through Him.

And again when he offered in his loved St Paul's counsel to the friend of his boyhood for the organisation of "a fresh diocese under unique conditions" he summed up all in the application of the apostolic phrase: *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means win some*. [You too], he said, will strive to "become all things to all men—to the miners as a "miner, to the Cornishmen as a Cornishman, to the "Wesleyans as a Wesleyan, though you are a

¹ Πάντα ὑμῶν, a Sermon before the University Church Society, 1873, pp. 27, 36 f.

"Churchman—that [you] may bring all together in Christ¹."

Yes: The law of our Christian accommodation is the paramount duty of winning followers not for ourselves, or for our party, but for our Master. The condition under which our boundless wealth may become a blessing to us, is the unceasing sense that we are not our own, but bought by His blood. All real sympathy, in other words, rests on a spiritual basis: all lasting cooperation is a service to a common Lord.

So he taught, and so he laboured at Cambridge and at St Paul's, and at Durham and at Lambeth with "an energetic fervour of zeal" to use the words in which he himself described the requirements of our Episcopate "a large sympathy of love, a quick insight "and a calm judgment, great caution, great boldness, a staunch tenacity of conservatism, a ready "fertility of innovation²." No real difficulty was too trifling for his considerate regard, or too great for his courageous endeavour. He undertook nothing with half his power. Whatever he did was wrought from his whole heart. He gave himself, and therefore he was able to claim from others no less than he gave.

As he loved his University, he was among the first to make its resources and its spirit minister to the

¹ All things to all men, a *Sermon preached in St Paul's Cathedral on St Mark's Day* [1877] at the consecration of the first Bishop of Truro, pp. 14 f.

² *Id.* p. 15.

higher education of the whole country. As he loved his College, he sought untiringly to use its power for the reinvigoration of the larger life of the University. He drew from his unsurpassed knowledge of the early growth of Christianity an answer to the charge of inadequate results brought against modern Missions. He gave wise counsel and encouragement to the novel efforts of the Church Army. The causes of cooperation and temperance found in him a courageous advocate. The cause of purity is identified with his name. The seventy "sons" whom he has left in the Diocese, trained for their ministry under his roof, will never forget that he charged them to claim for Christ every interest of life; and the respectful crowds of pitmen and artisans, the closed shops and drawn blinds of the colliery villages, through which he was borne two days ago to his chosen resting-place, shewed that the charge has not been in vain.

5. In all these ways he was strong; but the last secret of his strength, as it must be of our strength, was his devotion to a Living God, as he worked from hour to hour "face to face with the glory of the Eternal "Father shining full from the Person of Christ¹." The Christ Whom he preached was neither an abstraction of theology nor a *Christ after the flesh*, but the Creator, Redeemer, Fulfiller, present by *the Spirit sent in His Name* in the individual soul, and in humanity, and in the universe, *bearing all things by the word of His power*

¹ *Id.* p. 16.

to their appointed end. He knew, and he lived and thought and wrote as knowing, that the Incarnation is not a fact only of one point of time, but an eternal truth, through which all experience and all nature laid bare to their sternest realities, can still be seen to be divine, a present message from Him *in Whom we live and move and have our being*. And we may well be thankful that the last words on which he looked with failing sense were the expression of his own faith through the pen of St Paul: *I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Brethren, however imperfectly the portraiture may have been sketched, yet we can all feel that it is the portraiture of a true man, of a true Christian, of a true Churchman, of a true father in God; of one who felt that no prescription can absolve us from the duty of grappling fearlessly with new or unheeded facts, and wresting a blessing from them; who felt that the confession of Christianity belongs to the ideal of a nation; who felt that our own Communion is not of to-day or yesterday, but in its essence the bequest of the apostles, and in its form the outcome of our English character and our English history. Does it not stir, and encourage and inspire

us? Does it not chasten and restrain us, and bid us learn from the past the true measure of our own controversies and trials, and feel that we too live in the presence and by the power of the Ascended Christ?

There is on all sides a strange and demoralising uneasiness, a suspicion of insincerity in the maintenance of the old faiths. We do not dare to look boldly on the dark places about us, and they become fertile in appalling phantoms. "There is," a shrewd observer said sadly to me, "just a faint ring of uncertainty in most of the professions of belief which are made publicly." Is it then nothing to hear, as it were from the grave, the voice of one whom none ever dared to accuse of incompetence or inadequate knowledge, or to suspect of holding a brief for a cause to which he had not committed his own soul: "I believe from my heart that the truth which this Gospel [of St John] more especially enshrines—the truth that Jesus Christ is the very Word Incarnate, the manifestation of the Father to mankind—is the one lesson which, duly apprehended, will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here by imparting to it hope and light and strength, the one study which alone can fitly prepare us for a joyful immortality hereafter¹."

¹ The conclusion of a Lecture delivered in 1871, and printed in the *Expositor* for 1890. In a prefatory note the Bishop adds: "Looking

There is again a pessimism among many thoughtful men born of intellectual isolation. We see little and it seems to be sad. We substitute minuteness of knowledge for breadth of view. The record of a day or a year may seem to shew how "good struggles but "evil reigns." The creature of an hour might prove conclusively to his fellows that the setting of the sun would bring in the end of life¹.

Is it then nothing to hear an utterance which comes back to us after two months with unspeakable solemnity: "It was the strain, both in London and "at home, in connexion with this Pan-Anglican "gathering which broke me down hopelessly. I did "not regret it then, and I do not regret it now. I "should not have wished to recall the past, even if "my illness had been fatal. For what after all is "the individual life in the history of the Church? "Men may come, and men may go,...but the broad, "mighty, rolling stream of the Church itself—the "cleansing, purifying, fertilising tide of the river of "God—flows on for ever and ever²."

There is, once more, a perilous and half-unconscious wilfulness among us. We have lost through our insularity the instinct and the spirit of obedience.

"over it again after this long lapse of time, I have nothing to withdraw. "Additional study has only strengthened my conviction that this narrative of St John could not have been written by any one but an eye-witness." *Expositor*, Jan. 1890, pp. 1 f.

¹ I cannot recall where I read this most suggestive parable.

² *Address to the Diocesan Conference*, Oct. 1889.

We are proud of our independence; and we grow hastily confident, perhaps only through the confidence of others. We are convinced in our own minds, and we will not allow that which we honestly believe to be called in question.

Is it then nothing to hear from one who spoke with a ruler's responsibility of the hopes and dangers of our Church :

"Her mission is unique; her capabilities and opportunities are magnificent¹." "She is intermediate, and she may be mediatorial when the opportunity arrives²." "Shall we spoil this potentiality, shall we stultify this career, shall we mar this destiny, by impatience, by self-will, by party-spirit, by misguided and headstrong zeal, by harsh words embittering strife, by any narrowness of temper, or of aim, or of view?¹" "by a lawless assertion of self-will which obtrudes its own fancies at all hazards, by a reluctance to welcome zeal in others when overlaid by extravagance, by a too great importunity in urging at unseasonable moments reforms which are wise and salutary in themselves, by a too great stiffness in refusing to contemplate the necessity of any reforms³." "A grave responsibility—no graver can well be conceived—rests upon us all. Never were our hopes brighter; never

¹ *Primary Charge*, 1882, p. 93.

² *Address to the Diocesan Conference*, Oct. 1887.

³ All things to all men, p. 13.

“were our anxieties keener; never was there greater
“need of that divine charity which beareth all things,
“believeth all things. Happy they who so feel, and
“so act; for theirs is the crown of crowns¹.”

He did so feel, so act, and, as we trust, he has
that crown of crowns. ‘

I said that I could not admit that the life towards
which we have looked, a life which may be summed
up in three clauses, “from strength to strength,” “from
weakness to strength,” “from strength to the rest of
God,” can be rightly called incomplete. I will dare
to add that it will be through our own want of faith,
if that which is our personal sorrow becomes a loss to
the great cause which it is our joy to serve. The
departed are for us at length all they aspired to be.
The reverence with which we honour them reveals to
us the capacity for good which is still left to us.
Life passes off from them fuller and purer than before.
They rule the living not only by a physical necessity
but by a spiritual influence. They speak with a
changeless authority. Their voice—the voice which
we have just heard—comes directly to the soul.

Once before within our recollection a voice from
the deathbed was made to us a messenger of peace:
God grant, in His great mercy, that this voice from
the tomb may be filled with no less virtue to confirm
our hearts and to stay our divisions.

¹ *Primary Charge*, 1882, p. 93.

Then shall we feel why we are taught in our Communion Office to "bless God's holy Name for all "His servants departed this life in His faith and fear," not with a pious complacency which costs us nothing, but with a strenuous endeavour to follow the example which we have studied.

So, brethren, let us all now beseech God with the intense supplication as of *one man in Christ Jesus* that He will give us grace, to learn each in our appointed office, the lessons of His servant's accepted service: grace to feel the infinite vastness of the Truth which is given to us not to supply material for empty speculation but strength for the accomplishment of duty: grace to take earnest heed lest through any impatience, or irreverence, or carelessness on our part some weaker brother may be tempted to unreflecting dogmatism, or superstition, or pride: grace to strive untiringly to understand others and to be understood, as knowing that there is room among us for every variety of loyal zeal: grace to review with thankful and true hearts the grandeur of our inheritance and the far-reaching issues of our brief stewardship: grace to bring our gifts of reason and knowledge, of character and place, our opinions and our arguments, silent and prostrate, before the presence of God, and to take back for use only that which has borne the purifying light of the Eternal; grace to recognise as the law of our several lives, "from God, in the face of God, unto God." What strength, what patience, what self-control,

what humility, what hope, what cleansing of every spiritual sense will then follow, for the healing of our manifold distresses.

It is told, that when Bishop Butler drew near his end he asked his chaplain if he also heard the music which filled his own heart. The music was not unreal because the untrained ear could not catch its harmonies. And it may be that if our whole being is henceforth set heavenwards we shall hear when we are crossing waste places, as it seems, in loneliness and sorrow and inward conflict, the great hosts by whom we are encompassed taking up our human psalm, and saying in our souls: *They go from strength to strength: every one of them appeareth before God in Zion.*

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